

12 Reasons Why Christians Shouldn't Fear Satan or Spiritual Warfare

1. Jesus created things including Satan and spirit beings. He has authority over them. Colossians 1:16-17
2. Jesus proved He is greater than Satan when he easily resisted Satan's attack. Matthew 4:1-11
3. All demons that Jesus encountered feared Him! Matthew 8:28-30
4. Jesus gave His authority over demons to his followers which includes us. Luke 10:17-19, Ephesians 6:10
5. Jesus destroyed Satan's power by dying on the cross Hebrews 2:14 and disarmed spiritual rulers and authorities Colossians 2:15
6. We have the Spirit of God indwelling us and He is greater than Satan. 1 John 4:4. Therefore Satan cannot control any Christian against his or her will.
7. The Scripture promises Satan can't touch us. 1 John 5:18-19 There are no warnings about or examples of Satan or any demons physically hurting any believers in the Bible except the unusual case of Job.
8. We were delivered from Satan's domain and transferred to Jesus' kingdom when we trusted in Christ. Colossians 1:13
9. Satan and his forces can only attack us if God allows. Job 1-2, Luke 22:31-32
10. We have been given a defense, the armor of God, to resist all satanic attacks. Ephesians 6:10-18
11. The fact that the Bible tells us to resist Satan assumes we can do it. 1 Peter 5:8-9, James 4:7
12. In the one story in the Bible where God allows Satan to unleash his power on a believer, Job and his family, Satan did not win and Job ended up better off than before he was attacked. Job 42:10-17

Where does fear come from? God has not given us a spirit of fear 2 Timothy 1:7. Fear is an attacking thought from the enemy. Fear is the opposite of love 1 John 4:18.

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faith in HIM we are empowered to stand against the Devil - "and he will flee". We can live life completely free from fear. Even if we die we will be in Heaven for eternity with Christ. What is to fear in that? If Christianity is what Bread is stating then we, of course, are doomed and fear would be legitimate. The PROOF I have is both personal and gleaned from situations where Christians were extremely persecuted. Take the circumstance of John Bergen and his wife Eloise. The machete attack they suffered destroyed many other peoples hearts when they received the same violent treatment. Their faith is exemplary and a very strong testimony to true Christian faith.

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Ward Cushman Mod → jaytee2521@hotmail.com • a year ago

Thanks, John. I appreciate your comments. I have been teaching on this for many years and I have found that fear is the most common reaction to any discussion or thoughts of Satan. I agree with you that it should not be but it's not helpful to just say "Don't be afraid of Satan." People have hear that and still fear so we must teach from the Word why that is so.

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19. The Beast and the False Prophet (Rev 13:1-18)

The Beast Out of the Sea (13:1-10)

As one studies this section, it is helpful to keep in mind that this prophecy is closely tied to the prophecies of Daniel (cf. Daniel 2:42, 44; 7:7, 8, 20; 8:25; 11:36; 9:27). Also remember that this is still a parenthetical section describing one of the key forces, kingdoms, and personages of the Tribulation. In his first advent, the Lord Jesus said:

He who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him who sent Me. 45 And he who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me. 46 I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness. 47 And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. (John 12:44-47) (emphasis mine).

Two beasts are described in chapter 13, one from the sea (vs. 1) and one from the land (vs. 11). With the beast out of the sea, we come to that one who, regardless of his claims as the white horse rider or peace maker, comes as a great source of darkness into the world. He comes not to save the world, but to damn the world. In essence, what we have in this chapter in the rise of the beast and the false prophet is nothing short of the 'trinity from hell' in that both are the product of the machinations of that old serpent, the devil or Satan.

HIS APPEARANCE AND IDENTITY (1-2)

Chapter 12 closed with the dragon who, knowing that his time was short, was enraged with the woman (Israel), and with him going off to make war with her children. In the first verse of chapter 13 in our English Bibles, we find him standing on the seashore with the beast rising up out of the sea, but in the Greek text this sentence is verse 18 of chapter 12. There is a logical progression here of cause and effect. The dragon standing on the sand

of the seashore continues the story of the dragon of chapter 12 who, as explained in 12:9, is none other than Satan himself. Some manuscripts have "I stood," i.e., John stood, but the older manuscripts have "he stood," i.e., the angry dragon.

The logical progression is the angry dragon looks out over the sea, a picture of the Gentile world powers which he dominates. He is looking for two things: (a) For the best method with which to persecute Israel, and (b) for the best way he can rise to greater power in order to be worshipped. Chapter 13 describes the method he will choose, the end-time form of the old Roman empire which, by this point in the Tribulation, has developed into a ten nation confederation with a very subtle leader, one whom Satan will now use in the most hideous ways.

Who is Satan? As seen previously, he is the prince of this world and the god of this age. He is the fallen angel and the anointed cherub who fell from his place of service because he sought to be like the most high. Satan has always been desperately set on *ruling* men and being *worshipped* by them; now he sees his chance. The mystery of lawlessness has always been at work, but after the church age, the Restrainer (God indwelling His church by the Holy Spirit) has been removed (2 Thess. 2:6-7). Also, as Newell points out:

Because men by trifling with the truth and utter impenitence have opened the way, God will now send them a strong delusion that they may believe the devil's lie ("*the lie*"—II Thessalonians 2:11, Greek).

The beast, therefore, set before us in Revelation 13, is the dragon's masterpiece of delusion, leading to worship of *himself* (Revelation 13:4).¹⁵³

The "sand of the sea" undoubtedly portrays the many people who make up the nations, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea (Rev. 20:8). Standing on "the sand of the sea," suggests Satan's position as the usurper of the earth and its many peoples and of his power over them. Remember that Isaiah likens the nations to a roaring and restless sea that cannot be quiet and whose waters (their humanistic way of life and political agitation) can only churn up refuse and mud; a fitting picture of the products of a world without peace with God. They have no peace because they have rejected the true Prince of Peace and will turn to their own solutions to life and to the antichrist as their means to world peace, but in reality, this will be not much more than a self-centered pursuit for comfort and personal affluence (cf. Isa. 17:12-13; 57:20-21; Rev. 17:1, 15).

Before moving into chapter 13, a brief review of probable world conditions at this point will be profitable:

(1) The white horse rider who conquers (gains control) by peace tactics, power politics, and by his charismatic personality and persuasive language, has already risen on the scene (cf. Rev. 6:1-2; Dan. 8:23-25; 1 Thess. 5:11f). This brings about the ten nation confederation of Europe, a federation of nations that were once a part of the old Roman empire (cf. Dan. 2:42-44; 7:7-8, 20-24). We have the potential for this in NATO and in the European Common Market.

(2) The leader of this confederation will make a seven-year covenant with Israel designed to give Israel protection in the land and solve the very volatile Israel-Arab dispute of the coveted land of Palestine (Dan. 9:27). This treaty begins Daniel's 70th week or the Tribulation.

(3) Three kings of the confederacy rebel, but the rising dictator defeats them (Dan. 7:8, 20-25) and emerges as the undeniable leader.

(4) It appears that the King of the North will at this point in the middle of the Tribulation attack Israel who will then be dwelling in the land in comparative peace and safety because of the covenant or peace treaty. This king of the North comes with his Arab allies, the Pan-Arabic block and her other allies (Ezek. 38:1-9).

(5) These armies (the King of the North and his allies) are destroyed on the mountains of Israel by the direct intervention of God (Ezek. 38:21-23). Regarding Ezekiel 38:1 and this invasion, Ryrie writes:

Vs. 38:1 Chapters 38-39 describe a future attack on Israel and God's deliverance of His people. The invading armies come out of the remote parts of the north (38:15) to invade Palestine but are destroyed by supernatural intervention (39:3). Seven months will be required to bury their corpses (39:11-15), and their weapons will supply fuel for Israel for seven years (39:9-10). The time of the battle is unclear. Israel will be living in security, whether real or imagined (38:11-12), which might indicate that the battle takes place before the middle of the Tribulation, while Israel feels secure under a treaty with Antichrist. But the consummation of the battle involves birds and beasts eating the flesh of the warriors, a scene similar to the description of Armageddon at the end of the Tribulation (39:17-20; Rev. 19:17-18). Also, at the conclusion of the conflict the nations will understand the judging hand of God, and Israel will know that the LORD (Yahweh) is their God (Ezek. 39:21-22). Perhaps the first thrust will begin just before the middle of the Tribulation, with successive waves of the invasion continuing throughout the last part of that period and building up to Armageddon. John envisioned a battle of Gog and Magog at the conclusion of the millennial kingdom (Rev. 20:7-9), but this is different in time and characteristics from the one Ezekiel describes. The common use of Gog and Magog does not equate the two battles. Here those words refer to a definite area, but in Revelation they refer to enemies of Christ worldwide.¹⁵⁴

(6) This destruction of the King of the North will create a tremendous political vacuum in the world. Until now the head of the ten nation confederation has been a leader of the European Confederation only, but now with the dragon surveying the sea of nations, he sees the way open for world domination through this European dictator whom he has undoubtedly helped to bring to power. So now enters the system of the beast. The white horse rider who won his territory by peace tactics, now becomes the beast under the possession of Satan himself (Rev. 13:2b).

From the context, the dragon looks out over the sea of nations and then implements the system of the beast to carry out his desired goals—the persecution of Israel and his own worship (cf. 13:4-6).

"Then I saw a beast." "Beast" is the Greek *qhrion* (cf. 6:8; 11:7) which refers to a wild and rapacious animal or beast. It is to be contrasted with *zwn*, "living creature," used for the holy angels, and with *ktinos*, "a beast of burden" as an ox. *Qhrion* points out two things. First, it portrays the brutal, bloody, uncontrolled and wild character of the dictator and his system; it is inhuman. Second, *qhrion* portrays this antichrist figure as the epitome and paramount outgrowth of the character of Satan who is himself called "the great red dragon."

As John is watching this scene, he sees the beast coming up out of the sea. "Coming up" is in a descriptive present which portrays the development of this man and his system through the political and military maneuvers that gradually bring him to power within the nations of Europe.

"The sea" as suggested, is symbolical of masses of people (cf. Rev. 17:15), and especially of the Gentile nations. The system of the beast will be derived from and will be the final Gentile world power to have dominion of Israel during the times of the Gentiles (see Luke 21:24). So Israel, as the nation to whom God promised the land of Israel, is related to the *land*, and the nations to the *sea*. In support of this are following facts:

- (1) In Revelation 17:1, 15 and Daniel 7:2-3, all the nations portrayed there, which are linked with the waters or the sea, are Gentile powers as Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.
- (2) In the visions of Daniel 2 and 7, Daniel sees Gentile powers who will continue to rule and dominate over Israel until the return of Jesus Christ. Jesus called this "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). This began in 587 B.C. with the Babylonian captivity and will continue to the end of the Tribulation, until the return of Christ (Rev. 19).
- (3) One should also note and compare Daniel's description of the four Gentile powers (7:4-25), especially the fourth, with that of John in Revelation 13:2-6.
- (4) Daniel 9:26-27 clearly shows that the final world ruler would be a Roman, one out of the old Roman empire, a Gentile power.
- (5) Finally, some see the "sea" here as a reference to the Mediterranean Sea and believe the beast, though a Gentile, will rise up out of the Mediterranean area. The "sea" here shows us that the beast is both a Gentile and from the Mediterranean area.

"Having ten horns and seven heads." This monstrous representation portrays the nature of the end time kingdom, the final worldwide political system. But what exactly is the point of the ten horns and the seven heads? What do they stand for?

Remember that in prophecy it is sometimes hard to determine when a passage is speaking about the king or the kingdom since the kingdom is the epitome of the king from whom it gets its character. For instance, even in the U.S., we often speak of the administration in power by the name of the President, i.e., the Clinton administration. Likewise, a passage may refer to the king in one verse and the kingdom in the next, or vice versa. This is evidently the case here. Verses 1 and 2 look more at the kingdom, the empire; verse 3 includes both, and verses 4 and following refer more to the individual, the satanically controlled or possessed dictator. So "the beast" may refer to the end time kingdom, the empire, or to the dictator or both.

THE TEN HORNS

"The ten horns" is a reference to the ten nation confederation of the future which will form the nucleus of this end time kingdom. According to Daniel chapters 2 and 7, it will be a revived form of the old Roman empire since these ten nations will come out of the fourth nation which would arise after Daniel's time, historically we know this was Rome (Dan. 7:7, 24). Revelation 17:12 also states that "the ten horns which you saw are ten kings." These are ten kings who rule over ten nations, fragments of the old Roman empire. After the fall of the empire, Rome was divided up into many separate kingdoms which became the European nations of modern times. But in the end times, these nations, at least ten of them, will confederate together as one, forming what is in reality a revived Roman empire. Since the fall of Rome, these fragments of the old empire have continued to exist, but in the future, they will be brought together in a revived Roman empire.

Rome will undoubtedly become the headquarters of the new empire, both politically and religiously at least during the first half of the Tribulation (cf. Rev. 17:7, 18 which shows the close affiliation of the political part with the religious part in the first half). However, there is good reason to believe, as we shall see later, that this relationship will be broken by the beast who will then move his headquarters to Babylon which will be rebuilt in the last days (cf. Rev. 17:16-18; 18:16-19). We will look at the rebuilding of Babylon in a later study.

THE SEVEN HEADS

This system of the beast also has "seven heads. This is explained for us in 17:9-10. "The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits and they are seven kings ..." The seven heads are seven mountains and seven kings. Some see this as a reference first to the seven hill city of Rome, and then to seven dynasties or rulers of the old Roman empire, as kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, military tribunes and emperors, or as seven successive emperors of Imperial Rome, as Nero (A.D. 54-68), Galba (A.D. 68), Otho (A.D. 69), Vitellius (A.D. 69), Vespasian (A.D. 69-79), Titus (A.D. 79-81), and Domitian (A.D. 81-91) under whom great persecution of the church occurred. So it would thus refer to the city and to those who ruled in Rome. Quite clearly the beast is not only a kingdom or an empire, but also a man (cf. 2 Thess. 2:8-9; Dan. 9:27; 11:36; 7:24-25).

But another and I believe a better interpretation of the seven heads is that the seven heads represent seven phases of Gentile powers or nations which find their culmination in the beast. The ten horns look at the *future* history of the beast and the seven heads, the *past* history. The seven heads are mountains, seven successive historic Gentile kingdoms, who are represented by seven kings or rulers. This is supported by the following:

(1) Revelation 17:10 tells us the seven mountains are kings. This could indicate that the mountains are symbolical for the kingdoms these seven kings represent.

(2) Rome is known as the city of seven hills, but the hills of Rome are not mountains.

(3) The term mountain is commonly used in Scripture as an image of a kingdom (Psalm 30:7; Isaiah 2:3; Dan. 2:35, 45; Jer. 51:5).

(4) But more importantly, chapter 17 deals with the harlot system of Babylon which goes all the way back to the time of Nimrod and all these Gentile world powers have been her lovers and supporters, not Rome alone (cf. 17:1-2, 15). It is more likely that the seven mountains refer to seven successive Gentile kingdoms which go way back, far beyond Rome.

Then to which nations do these refer? It refers to the major world empires up to the time of Rome and which also were connected with the nation of Israel and her enslavements. These were:

- (1) **Egypt:** This was the first great world empire and the cause of Israel's enslavement before entrance into the land.
- (2) **Assyria:** Historically this was the next great empire which took the northern kingdom of Israel into captivity in 722 B.C.
- (3) **Babylon** or the Chaldean empire: This is where Daniel's prophecies begin and where we have the captivity of Judah, the southern kingdom. In Daniel's prophecies he does not list the three preceding Gentile powers because his prophecies look forward only from his time in history to the final Gentile power and the return of the Lord. But Revelation 13 and 17 both look back (the seven heads) and forward (the ten kings).
- (4) **Medo-Persia:** This Gentile power followed Babylon and was the kingdom under which a remnant of Israel were allowed to return to the land to rebuild the city and the temple (cf. Ezra and Nehemiah).
- (5) **Greece:** This was the kingdom of Alexander and his successors who likewise ruled over the land of Palestine.
- (6) **Rome:** The Roman Empire of New Testament times was the empire of the emperors who reigned from before Christ: Augustus (30 B.C. - A.D. 14), to Domitian when Revelation was written (A.D. 81-96), and afterwards. During this time, Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews dispersed world wide (A.D. 70 - A.D. 135). Later the Roman empire divided into the eastern and western divisions (the two legs of the image in Daniel 2) and finally fell, becoming fragmented into many nations.

What about the seventh head? Revelation 17:10-11 explains the seventh head. It is really a future kingdom though it has historical roots in the sixth kingdom. Revelation 17:10 says "five are fallen." These five are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia and Greece. "One is," which is the sixth, the Roman empire of John's day. "And the other is not yet come," this is the revived Roman empire, the ten nation confederation or the ten horns under the leadership of the white horse rider in the first half of the Tribulation.

Compare 17:11 with 17:8, "The beast which you saw was (refers to his past history, old Rome), and is not (does not presently exist; from John's standpoint it would soon pass from the scene, i.e., the fall of Rome), and is about to come up (refers to the revived Roman empire)." Now in 17:11, this beast, the Roman empire represented by its king, becomes an eighth kingdom while at the same time being one of the seven, specifically, the seventh. The eighth refers to the imperial form of the revived Roman empire in the last half of the Tribulation under the power of the dictator, the man of lawlessness or the antichrist who is also called the beast.

THE TEN DIADEMS

The “ten diadems” refer to a form of self government and control. When the end time system first begins to rise up out of the sea of nations from the old Roman empire, it will be made up of ten independent nations each with their own king, though under the leadership of the beast. Later, in the middle of the Tribulation they give their power and authority to the beast (Rev. 17:13). However, as the system develops, three rebel and are conquered so that in the last half of the Tribulation there will only be seven crowns or nations (cf. 12:3b with Dan. 7:7-8, 20-22).

THE NAMES OF BLASPHEMY

Next we read that “on his heads were blasphemous names.” This points out the blasphemous character of these Gentile powers and is one of the key characteristics of this system of the future and especially of its leader. This will be done in three primary ways: (a) by claiming that he is God, (b) by trying to usurp the place of God, (2 Thess. 2:4; Dan. 7:8), and (c) by slandering the true God (Rev. 13:6; Dan. 11:36-37; 7:25).

The composite nature of the beast is seen in the words, “the beast is like a leopard, ... a bear, ... and a lion (Rev. 13:2a).

Theodore Epp in his commentary on Revelation has an excellent explanation of this composite nature of the beast. He writes:

This verse gives a further description of the coming wicked kingdom and its ruler during the Tribulation. The description of this beast is a composite of the characteristics of the other beasts mentioned in Daniel 7. There the first three kingdoms are characterized by a lion (v. 4), a bear (v. 5), and a leopard (v. 6). These animals represented the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece. The characteristics of these kingdoms are combined in the last kingdom which will be the ten-kingdom Roman Empire. The Roman Empire in Daniel 7 was seen as indescribable because it was “diverse from all the beasts that were before it” (v. 7).

This empire, as seen in Revelation 13, will have all the brilliance, culture and swiftness of a leopard—a reference to the previous Grecian Empire. It will also have the tremendous strength, tenacity of purpose, and brutality of a bear—a reference to the Medo-Persian Empire. Then too it will have the autocratic and majestic power of a lion—a reference to the Babylonian Empire.¹⁵⁵

HIS AFFLICTION (3A)

Verse (3a). “And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain ... and it was healed.” As explained previously, the seven heads of Revelation 17 refer to seven mountains or seven successive world governments extending back to the time of Egypt, but reaching forward to the revived Roman empire of the first half of the Tribulation and the ten nation confederation. Here John sees one of these heads, that is, one of these world powers with a

fatal wound that was healed. But Revelation 17:10 also teaches us that these seven heads are also seven kings. Now, as we look at this passage, several questions need to be asked and answered.

Question 1: To which one of the seven heads does this refer?

Revelation 17:8-11 answers this for us. It is the seventh head, i.e., the revived form. It is the head which “was, (old Rome) and is not, (the fallen Roman empire in its fragmented condition) and is about to come” (the revived Roman empire of the first half of the Tribulation, and the imperial form which becomes an eighth in the last half of the Tribulation). The words, “was, is not, and is about to come” are equivalent to the fatal wound that was healed.

Question 2: Does this refer to the empire or to the king or both?

Some believe that Revelation 13:3 refers to some resurrected being of past history as Judas or Nero or even to one of the more recent rulers like Napoleon or Hitler or, because of the fatal wound to the head, even John F. Kennedy. Others believe it refers only to the revival of Rome as a world empire.

The primary restoration here has to be that of the Roman empire, the political system of this satanically-controlled man. This seems clear from Revelation 13:1-2 and 17:8-9 which relates the beast to world kingdoms or nations. In 13:2 the beast is seen as a composite of the kingdoms of Babylon, Greece and Medo-Persia, and in 17:9 the beast is related to seven mountains, world kingdoms on which the woman sits. This is evident from 17:1 and 15 which shows us, under another figure, that of water, that these are nations upon which she sits.

Yet, other verses indicate that a person, a political leader is also in view. In 13:5-6 we see the beast as a person opening his mouth in blasphemy against God. In 13:14 an image is to be made of the beast and in 13:18 his number is the number of man. Finally, the beast’s final doom is to go to destruction, literally “and into destruction he goes” (cf. 17:8, 11, 19-20 with 2 Thess. 2:3). This clearly shows that the political leader is also in view. As pointed out earlier, it is often hard to distinguish between the king and the kingdom because the kingdom is the personification of the king.

Revelation 17:9-12 moves from the kingdom, to the king, to both, and back to the king who goes into perdition or destruction (Rev. 19:20). Therefore, it seems best to take the “deadly wound that was healed” of 13:3, as with the words, “was, is not, and is about to come” (Rev. 17:8, 11) to refer to the fall and restoration of the Roman empire in its imperial form. As mentioned, this is evident because the beast is seen as a composite of empires of past history (13:2). However, it is likely that Satan will bring off an apparent death and resurrection of this man of lawlessness, the leader of the empire, to correspond with the restoration of the imperial form of the Roman empire. This will cause the world to marvel and follow after the beast and accept his dictatorship as the emperor (cf. 13:3-4; 17:8).

Question 3: Will this be a literal and real resurrection of some historic figure either of the past like Judas or Hitler or of some future figure?

The answer is, No! It will be an apparent death and resurrection to counterfeit and create an imitation of Christ's death and resurrection. It will involve something apparently miraculous, but it will not be the resurrection of someone who has died, decayed, and who will be resurrected to life by Satan.

Note several reasons this will not be a genuine resurrection:

(1) The concept of "the abyss" (Rev. 11:7; 17:8). This does not mean that this man himself will be raised up out of hell or gehenna or hades. This simply means that the source and power of the beast and his system is Satan himself. The abyss is the abode of demons and not of man (cf. Rev. 9:1-2, 11; Luke 8:31; 2 Pet. 2:4). The system will be demonically inspired and controlled. This is the point of Revelation 11:7 and 17:8.

(2) The translations "as if it had been slain" (NASB) or "seemed to have had a fatal wound" suggest either an apparent death (near death) but did not really die. Literally the Greek says, "as slain unto death." There is really no "if" here. Some have argued that the "if" implies this is only an apparent death. Though I do not believe the beast will literally die and be brought back to life, we should note the exact same words are used of the Lord in Revelation 5:6 and certainly the Lord really died. If the leader is involved here, the key may be found in the word "slain" which is *sfazw*, "to slay, slaughter." It was a sacrificial term used of the animals of sacrifice. The use of this word indicates that the deadly wound will be designed to be like the slaying of the Lamb; it will be designed to imitate the death of Christ, if not in method, at least in purpose or function. So the use of this word doesn't really prove it was a real death, only an apparent death. It suggests it was part of Satan's strategy to imitate Christ's death and resurrection. Here is Satan's masterpiece of deceit.

(3) No where else in Scripture is it indicated that Satan has the power of resurrection or the power to produce life. Instead of being a life giver, he is portrayed as a life taker, a murderer or a destroyer. He has "the power of death" (Heb. 2:14). Only Christ is seen as the One who gives life (cf. 1 Cor. 15:22; John 11:25; 5:24-29).

(4) The wicked or the unbelieving dead are confined in torments until the great white throne judgment and there is no suggestion from Scripture that God would allow them to be brought up from their confinement before their time of judgment.

(5) Satan is, however, the master deceiver and he could easily perform such a deception as an apparent death and resurrection (2 Thess. 2:9; Rev. 12:9; 13:14-15).

So, more than likely this is a counterfeit, a supreme deception, and an attempt to imitate the resurrection of Jesus Christ in correspondence with the revival of the imperial form of Rome in order to gain the worship of the world.

HIS ACCLAIM AND WORSHIP (3B-4)

“And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast.” Concerning this coming world dictator, David Levy writes: “Most world dictators have proven to be persuasive speakers, able to motivate the masses to their political ideology. Like Adolf Hitler, who was able to mesmerize a whole nation by his inspiring speeches, the Antichrist will be no exception.”¹⁵⁶

His persuasive speech and cunning is actually anticipated in Daniel 8:23. Historically, in the near view of prophecy, this passage pertained to Antiochus and his persecution of the Jews, but ultimately, it seems to look forward to the rise of the beast (see 8:19). Walvoord writes:

There is no question among expositors that Antiochus is in view in this prophecy. What was prophesied was fulfilled literally through him. However, the prophecy looks beyond Antiochus to a future person (the Antichrist) of whom Antiochus is only a foreshadowing. This coming one is said to “stand against the Prince of princes” (v. 25). This can be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the prophecy must go beyond Antiochus and look forward to the coming of one whose ministry will parallel that of Antiochus.¹⁵⁷

So what can we learn from Daniel?

Daniel 8:23-25 And in the latter period of their rule, When the transgressors have run *their course*, A king will arise insolent and skilled in intrigue (ambiguous speech and deception). 24 And his power will be mighty, but not by his *own* power (he will operate by Satan’s power and by God’s permissive will), And he will destroy to an extraordinary degree And prosper and perform *his will*; He will destroy mighty men and the holy people. 25 And through his shrewdness (cunning and craftiness) He will cause deceit to succeed by his influence (his ability to persuade and delude); And he will magnify *himself* in his heart, And he will destroy many while *they are* at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, But he will be broken without human agency.

In Revelation 13:3 the words, “the whole earth,” shows the knowledge of this deception will reach everyone. This will be an easy matter with our present media capacity, with TV satellites and world-wide TV reception. This is undoubtedly one of the factors leading to his world-wide authority described in verse 7.

“Amazed” is the Greek *qaumazw* meaning “to cause one to marvel, wonder, or wonder at.” It is a causative verb. The tense is culminative and looks at the effect, the culmination of this deception of Satan that leads to the amazement of the world.

“And followed after.” Literally the Greek simply says “and the whole earth marveled after the beast.” “After” is *opisw*, a strong preposition of place, “behind, after.” It stresses that the world marvels and is so amazed that it gawks after the beast, following along in startled amazement. This is part of “the strong delusion” and part of “the lie” that Paul speaks of in 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12.

In this worship of the dragon and his beast, two things will be acknowledged by the people of the world (except for believers): (a) his uniqueness “who is like the beast” and (b) his power “and who is able to make war with him.” This will be the final touch that brings absolute sovereignty to his reign. Also, this will be the one great goal for which Satan has been striving for centuries. This worship of the dragon shows that not only will

demonism be rampant, but openly visible. The world will worship the devil through the system of the beast. Satan will openly be the god of this age.

HIS AGGRESSION AND ACTIVITY (5-7)

Remember that one of the purposes of the Tribulation is to show the character of Satan and his kingdom. We see it here very clearly through the beast. It includes:

HIS BLASPHEMY (THE RELIGIOUS SIDE)

The horrible blasphemies of the beast demonstrate the anti-religious, anti-God element in the character of the beast. His blasphemies against God and God's people, however, are ultimately aimed at promoting the worship of the beast himself. He will speak against God and His name. This includes mocking God's holy character and essence. Perhaps he will even claim he has defeated God or that God is dead. He will speak against God's dwelling place and those who dwell in heaven; this could include making fun of the goodness and righteousness of believers and of those who have sacrificed their lives for Jesus Christ while the beast and his followers live in the riotous pleasures of sin. Filled with disappointed rage, Satan will use the beast whom he controls to promote such words of blasphemy that it will make the worst blasphemies of history seem trifling by comparison!

HIS WARFARE (THE POLITICAL SIDE)

Satan has always hated believers and done everything in his power to persecute the people of God whether Israel or the church, but he has been restrained by the hand of God. Without that restraint, God's people would have perished from the earth. During the Tribulation, however, his persecution of the people of God will know no limits. It will be given to him by the sovereign plan of God to make war and even to overcome the saints, that is, kill them. As verse 7b shows us, this rule of the beast will end in slavery to Satan and to the flesh. Men will think they have freedom to do as they please, but find themselves with no mind of their own, dominated by the beast and by their flesh.

HIS AUTHORITY (2B, 5B, 7B, 10)

THE SOURCE OF HIS AUTHORITY (2B)

"And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority." In verse 4 we are told that the world will marvel at this beast and wonder, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" To the world of unbelieving and rebellious people, this beast will seem invincible

and from the human standpoint, the answer to their question is simply, no one! His power will come from Satan; it is demonic and supernatural, far beyond the abilities of ordinary men, and far beyond anything the world knows today. He will be so powerful, self-sufficient, and impressed with his power, he will actually honor no one except “the god of fortresses” (Dan. 11:38) or military power and conquests.

Repeatedly, the Scriptures tell us that this last time dictator and his government will be the epitome of a Satan-inspired government. In fact the beast himself will be literally possessed by Satan from all accounts. No human being can be as cunning, as ruthless, lawless, vile and blasphemous as this man without being either demon possessed or at least under the total control of Satan. Note what Lutzer and DeVries have written in regard to this coming world ruler.

... there is a network of organizations committed to bringing about a unified world order to address our major problems with creative solutions. Leading the pack will be a world ruler with the charisma to unify all religions and to weld a political structure with the muscle to forge global subjection. He will be both priest and king, both messiah and world emperor.

Remember that this ruler will derive his strength from the same source as Adolf Hitler, who controlled Germany with such hypnotic magnetism that his leadership was practically irresistible. Several books have been written that document Hitler's involvement with Eastern occultism. Indeed, the swastika is a Hindu symbol of divinity. Hitler's mentor, Dietrich Eckart, predicted that Hitler would be a world leader. Hitler was manipulated by invisible forces which he called “Unknown superiors,” in reality, demons who both controlled and terrorized him. Hitler told his friend Rauschnig that he was founding the Man-God order and that splendid being would be an object of worship. Rauschnig said of Hitler:

One cannot help thinking of him as a medium ... the medium is possessed ... beyond any doubt, Hitler was possessed by forces outside himself . . . of which the individual named Hitler was only the temporary vehicle.¹⁵⁸

Hitler's hatred of the Jews and his belief in the superiority of the Aryan nations were undoubtedly derived from Hinduism with its belief in the cast system—the idea that certain people are born inferior to others and that weeding out the undesirables is part of good leadership.

The New Messiah will be the Antichrist of Revelation 13. He will be worshipped on earth and will have awesome authority.¹⁵⁹

In this chapter that gives us God's revelation of this evil end time system, an interesting phrase is repeated six times (six is the number of manifested evil [cf. vs. 18]). The phrase, “was given to him,” occurs twice in verse 5, twice in verse 7, and in verses 14 and 15. Now what is the Tribulation, especially the last half? It is a time of divine judgments unleashed on the world for its continued rebellion. The repetition of “and it was given to him” indicates God's judicial unleashing of powers of incipient evil of which this world cannot, in its wildest imagination, dream.¹⁶⁰

But we must not forget that all of this occurs by the will of a sovereign God who uses Satan as His instrument of judgment on a stubborn, rebellious, unrepentant, and unbelieving world (see again Rev. 9:21). Throughout history God has repeatedly used Satan's schemes and evil men as instruments of His judgment (cf. Isa. 10:5-13).

Speaking of God's use of Assyria as "the rod of My anger And the staff in whose hands is My indignation" (vs. 5), God goes on to say, "Yet it does not so intend nor does it plan so in its heart, but rather it is its purpose to destroy, and to cut off many nations" (vs. 7). Then in verse 13 we are told, "For he (Assyria) has said, 'By the power of my hand and by my wisdom I did this, ...'" The Assyrian king was acting from his own evil desires and will, but he was still an instrument raised up by God as a tool of discipline. This is often perplexing for man. He asks, "Why does God permit or allow it to go unpunished and why does He use the likes of the Assyrians or of the beast in judgments?" The prophet Habakkuk had similar questions.

The book presents a picture of a man who trusted God, yet was perplexed. Habakkuk's questions were two: (1) Why did God permit the increasing evil in Judah to go unpunished (1:2-4)? (2) How could a holy God justify using the Babylonians, a people more wicked than the Jews, to punish the Jews (1:12-2:1)? The answer to the first question is recorded in 1:5-11 and to the second in 2:2-20. Thus the book is a theodicy, a defense of God's goodness and power in view of the existence of evil.¹⁶¹

In Revelation 13, Satan is allowed to give the beast three things. He gives the beast:

- (1) "Power." This is the Greek *dunamis*, which it is often used of miraculous powers, the power to perform miraculous wonders (cf. 2 Thess. 2:9; Heb. 2:4; Acts 2:22; 6:8). Satan will perform miraculous feats through this man as a part of his deception (cf. 2 Thess. 2:9-12 and Rev. 13:3-4).
- (2) "His throne." This refers to his position as king or emperor of the revived Roman empire, ruling supremely over the rest of the nations.
- (3) "Great authority." This would refer to the extension of his rule beyond the ten nation confederation as spelled out in Revelation 13:7, "authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation." Occurring under the sovereignty of God and as an element of His judgment, Satan will undoubtedly have the ability to raise up political rulers (Luke 4:5-8; 1 John 5:19; John 16:11; 12:31; 14:30; Eph. 6:12). During the Tribulation, as the unseen ruler of this world, Satan will have complete rule through the man of lawlessness, the beast, for a short time.

THE TIME OF HIS AUTHORITY (5B)

The beast will be given authority to act for forty-two months. In view of what we learned from chapter 12, this means from the middle of the Tribulation to the return of Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus said to the rabble who came to arrest him, "This is your hour, and the power (Greek *exousia*) of darkness." What a scene followed in the next few hours! But God will give up the whole earth, except His elect, for three and one-half years to this direful scene of Revelation 13.¹⁶²

THE EXTENT OF HIS AUTHORITY (7B-8)

His authority will extend to all peoples, to all the earthdwellers or earthlings, those whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life. True believers, those who do not worship the beast nor receive his mark (vs. 16), are here excluded; they do not worship him, but rather in many cases they will die for their faith. More will be said on the book of life later in this study of Revelation. These Tribulation saints, though many will die for their faith, will overcome the beast and the next words are especially addressed to them in verses 9-10.

THE END OF HIS AUTHORITY (9-10)

9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 10 If anyone is *destined* for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints. (NASB)

9 He who has an ear, let him hear. 10 If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. (NIV)

As can be seen from the difference in these translations, there is a major textual problem in the last half of verse 10 which affects our understanding of the meaning of this passage. The problem involves whether the first reference to the verb "kill" is an active future ("will kill"), or a aorist passive ("be killed"). The KJV, RSV, Phillips, NASB all follow the reading of the majority of MSS and render it, "If anyone kills with the sword." Concerning this reading, Johnson writes:

Combining this with the last phrase, the latter part of the verse yields either a warning directed toward Christians for them not to turn to violence and killing to vindicate themselves or a promise of requital to believers that their persecutors will be judged by God.

If, on the other hand, we follow the reading of A¹⁶³ [MSS witness], the translation will be as in NIV ... This yields the sense that Christians who are destined by God for death must submit to his will and not resist the oppressor. It is an appeal to loyalty.¹⁶⁴

Following the reading of the KJV or the NASB, Ryrie writes regarding verses 9-10:

The phrasing of verse 9 indicates a call to serious attention. An important principle is about to be announced in verse 10. It is the principle of retribution. After all that has been said about the power of the beast, verse 10 is a word of great comfort. The captor will be taken captive; the killer will be killed. When God's purposes are finished through the beast, God will take him captive and confine him to the lake of fire. In the knowledge of this is the patience and faith that sustains the saints who endure these persecutions.¹⁶⁵

Note that there are three "if" clauses in verses 9-10:

“If anyone has an ear” is addressed to anyone who might have ears to hear the Word of God. The only possible means of deliverance is through faith in the Word of God.

The second two “if” clauses (regardless of the reading discussed above) warn against anyone taking matters into their own hands to oppose this Satanic system by force. This is Satan’s hour, but it will be short lived and God’s people will triumph in the end. Knowing this and resting in it by faith will give endurance. So here is the assurance that God will bring sure judgment and defeat on the beast.

Finally, we should note one more thing about those who are addressed in verse 9 in the invitation to hear. Walvoord writes:

A close parallel as well as a contrast is also observable between this invitation and the invitation to the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3 where the exhortation is to “hear what the Spirit says unto the churches.” The omission of the phrase “unto the churches” in 13:9 is most significant and tends to support the teaching that the church, the body of Christ, has previously been raptured and is not in this period. This instruction is not addressed to the churches. The exhortation in Revelation 13 is much wider. It is to anyone who will listen, and the message is not addressed to the church as such but to the entire world.¹⁶⁶

Summary of the first beast:

- (1) He will be a Gentile (Rev. 13:15; Dan. 7) out of the sea, i.e., Gentile nations (Dan. 9:27). “The Prince of the people that shall come,” specifically he will be from the old Roman Empire.
- (2) Politically he will become the dictator of the revived imperial Roman empire of the last half of the Tribulation (Rev. 13; Dan. 9:27; 7:8). The beast and his system will become the final form of this Gentile world power. He begins as a political peacemaker and leader of a ten nation European confederation, but soon turns into the beast and dictator.
- (3) Religiously he supports, as all other Gentile powers before him, the ecumenical religion of Babylon, the harlot system of the first half of the Tribulation (Rev. 17:7), but turns against it in the last half to become himself the object of man’s worship (2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:17:16-17).
- (4) He is under the direct control of Satan and is Satan possessed (2 Thess. 2:9; Rev. 13:2). Thus, he is called the beast (Jhrion) because Satan, the dragon is his master (cf. 9:11; 11:7; 17:6; 16:13).
- (5) He has many names: (a) The little horn of Daniel 7:8. (b) The king of fierce countenance (Dan. 8:23). (c) The willful king of Daniel 11:36-40 (some refer this to the second beast but this doesn’t fit the circumstances of Daniel 11 or Revelation 13). (d) The prince that shall come (Dan. 9:27). (e) The man of sin or lawlessness (2 Thess. 2:3-10). (f) The rider on the white horse (Rev. 6:2). (g) The beast (Rev. 13:1). (h) The antichrist (1 John 2).

(6) His empire is called and viewed as: (a) The beast with seven heads and ten horns (Rev. 17:8-13; 13:1-2), like a leopard, a bear, and a lion. (b) The feet of the image of Daniel with ten toes made of iron and clay mingled together (see Dan. 2:31-45).

(7) His character and rise to power:

- Because of fear of a nuclear holocaust, population explosion, environmental destruction, etc., the world will be crying for “peace and safety.” This man will come on the scene with great persuasive power, personality magnetism, craft and oratorical skill, and he will persuade the West (Europe and probably the Americas) that he has the answer for peace. (The Americas are likely to be included because they are a part of the harlot system which he controls.) He will gain his ascendancy to power as a peacemaker (Dan. 8:25; 1 Thess. 5:3; Rev. 6:2; Dan. 9:27).
- A ten nation confederation will be formed, an alliance against the king of the North and the East (Dan. 2:7-7; Rev. 13:1; 17:12). He begins under demon influence and possession, to be lifted up with pride and to magnify himself and begins to get visions of world power (Dan. 8:25; 11:36; 2 Thess. 2:4).
- Three kings out of the ten rebel and are destroyed (Dan. 7:8, 24).
- The king of the North (perhaps Russia) is destroyed about the middle of the Tribulation and this leaves a vacuum (Ezek. 38).
- Satan is also restricted to earth, totally possessing this man and produces the beast who then begins to persecute Israel, breaks the covenant and overtly magnifies himself as god (Rev. 12:13; 2 Thess. 2:3f; Dan. 8:24; 9:21). He introduces idol worship of himself.
- His apparent death and resurrection followed by his rise to power as emperor of the revived Roman empire will astound the world. It may be that Satan will create the impression of a resurrection of this man from a mortal wound which will coincide with his swift rise as dictator in the middle of the Tribulation (Rev. 13:3, 12, 14; 17:8).
- There will come a challenge of his authority from the East at the end of the Tribulation (Rev. 16:12-16). This is the second phase of Armageddon. All the remaining armies, those aligned with the West and those of the East will be brought together to fight at Megeddo (Rev. 16:16; 19:17-19).
- Jesus Christ will come at this time and the rule of the beast will be terminated by the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. 19:19-20; Dan. 7:22, 26; 8:25; 9:27; 11:45).

The Beast Out of the Earth (13:11-18)

Now another beast is revealed to John, only this one is distinguished from the previous since he comes out of the earth or land. This completes the trinity of evil—the dragon, the beast out of the sea, and now, the beast out of the earth. The land beast operates under the authority of the sea beast and is totally committed to promoting not himself, but the first beast. The beast out of the land is also called the false prophet in other places in Revelation (16:13; 19:20; 20:10), probably because he promotes the first beast.

HIS DESCRIPTION (11)

“And I saw another beast.” “Another” is the Greek *allos* meaning, “another of the same kind.” He plays a different role, but in character he is another *qhrion*, one who is beastly, rapacious, cruel, and of course hostile to the flock of God’s people like a wolf, though dressed in sheep clothing. He is seen “coming up out of the earth.” As before, “coming up” is a present participle portraying a gradual, but continual ascendancy as a world figure and leader.

“Out of the earth” distinguishes and contrasts him with the beast out of the sea. These two beasts though similar, are diverse in origin. As the sea symbolized the mass of humanity, the nations, so “the earth, land, the ground, region, or country” (the Greek *gh*) may symbolize the nation Israel who is consistently related to the land in Scripture. As mentioned, some believe the sea refers to the Mediterranean and so the “earth” or land would refer to Palestine. Some think this beast will be a Jew, a false prophet among Jews who seeks to persuade men to follow the beast as the antichrist. On the other hand the contrast between the two beasts could simply be that the former arises first and at the time of terrible chaos among the nations (who are like the raging sea, Isa. 57:20) when people are fearful and crying for “peace and safety” and for a world ruler to settle world conditions. The second beast may come on the scene after world conditions have been settled somewhat, when chaos has given place to some order and a more stable government has settled in human society (the earth).

Some believe the idea that he is a Jew is supported by the things said about the second beast regarding his actions and character: (a) this beast is the false prophet who promotes the worship of the first beast by performing signs which are similar to Elijah’s, a prophet of Israel (13:12-13), and (b) he has two horns, like a lamb, the sacrificial animal of the Jews. But such a conclusion is not necessary.

However, in the light of the great anti-Semitism of the last half of the Tribulation, it seems unlikely that Satan or the first beast would allow a Jew to live much less occupy such an important position of power and authority. More than likely he is simply an important religious figure representing a rising religious and ecclesiastical movement which this second beast and Satan will use to promote the beast out of the sea (cf. 17:7, 15-16). The harlot in chapter 17 refers to religious Babylon, ecclesiastical Rome. The waters there represent the many nations she has influenced. Walvoord says, “The identification of the second beast as the head of the apostate church is indicated in many ways in the book of Revelation.”¹⁶⁷ While this apostate religious system will be destroyed by the beast (Rev. 17:16), it appears that the false prophet will, because of his close affinity with the first beast, make it through the entire Tribulation period since Revelation 19:20 shows that both the first beast and the false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire together.

That the false prophet and the second beast are one and the same is clear from Revelation 19:20. The false prophet is the one who “performs signs in his (the first beast) presence (13:12-13), by which he deceived those who had the mark of the beast ...” (Rev. 19:20).

“And he had two horns.” The horns are symbolic of great power, but not to the degree of the first beast who had ten horns. His horns were like those of “a lamb.” As the lamb is a religious symbol, a symbol of sacrifice, so this beast is a religious figure, and, as a lamb is also symbolical of a mild, lamb-like manner, so this second beast will adopt a mild lamb-like appearance, but he will be a wolf in sheep’s clothing. So what do we read next?

“And he spoke like a dragon.” That he will speak like a dragon shows us it connects him in character with the dragon, Satan. As with the first beast this beast gets his power from Satan. And just like the sea beast who begins his career as the white horse rider, proclaiming peace, so this mild religious appearance of the land beast is only a cover up, a sham for his real nature and goals.

There is an important lesson here for it demonstrates the typical behavior and character of any of man’s religions when a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is absent because in all man-made religions, the base upon which it operates is man and Satan’s deceptions, not God. Most religions will claim to be humanitarian, loving, and concerned for society, but in reality, since Satan is always at the root of the system (cf. 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Cor. 11:13-15), they can become vicious, cruel, and murderous as a wild beast whenever people do not toe the party line. A clear evidence of this are the many persecutions that have occurred in the name of religion like the inquisitions of Rome in 1233 and in 1542 and those of Spain in 1478 against Jews and Moslems. The New Age movement of our day is no different. This is a humanistic movement that talks about helping humanity, but in their language, they show a quick readiness to persecute Christians whom they know will stand in their way.

In New Age literature there is talk of a necessary cleansing process that will be needed to quell the opposition of those who resist the new religious/political order. Those who refuse to be initiated into Satan’s kingdom by taking the mark of the beast will be eliminated...¹⁶⁸

Lutzer and DeVries describe some of the goals of this new religious/political order. These will consist of things like: an end of nationalism, a new credit card system, a world food supply, and an emphasis on disarmament and the “elimination of nuclear weapons.” But note what they mention next that will be a part of the deception of this whole ploy:

All of this is to be done under the banner of love and peace. “Universal brotherhood” will be the slogan that will capture the aspirations and hopes of millions who will be drawn into the centrifugal force of this movement with best of intentions. The goals of this movement will be stated in such a way that it will appear that *only the most obstinate and belligerent could possibly oppose such noble ideals.*¹⁶⁹

But orthodox Jews and Christians will oppose such a satanic system and one that will actually promote the deification of man. So what will happen to these who resist such a system? Will they be ignored and allowed the freedom to believe, train up their children, and worship God according to their own convictions?

A state legislator, appearing on an Omaha talk show, said:

We have to control church schools because fundamental, Bible-believing Christians do not have the right to indoctrinate their children in their faith, because we, the state, are preparing all children for the Year 2000, when America will be part of the One World Global Society and their children won’t fit in.

New Agers are not nave enough to believe that everyone will accept the dawn of this new day. Some will oppose the emerging New Order. For these, there is another solution: intimidation, starvation, and liquidation.

This is not our theory, but the expressly stated agenda of the New Agers who candidly admit that drastic measures will have to be implemented to keep people in line...

... Those religions that will not accept the lie that man is God will be systematically eliminated by whatever means is necessary. In the New Age, disarmament will be the guise used to get the nations of the world to surrender their sovereignty to an authoritative global political machine, which will in turn use those weapons (if necessary) to force everyone, especially the religious objectors, to get on board with the new agenda.

Understand Satan's methodology: there is a vast difference between his advertising and the product that the purchaser receives. George Orwell called it *newspeak*. Talk about disarmament but plan to use weapons on those who refuse to accept your agenda. Campaign for individual freedom but plan to eliminate the freedom of those who don't toe the line. Affirm the value of humanity while at the same time you favor the systematic killing of the unborn and the eventual death of millions.¹⁷⁰

And it was the same in the days of ancient Rome. The late Francis Schaeffer wrote:

Rome was cruel, and its cruelty can perhaps be best pictured by the events which took place in the arena in Rome itself. People seated above the arena floor watched gladiator contests and Christians thrown to the beasts. Let us not forget why the Christians were killed. They were *not* killed because they worshiped Jesus. Various religions covered the whole Roman world... Nobody cared who worshiped whom so long as the worshiper did not disrupt the unity of the state, centered in the formal worship of Caesar. The reason the Christians were killed was because they were rebels.

... their worship (speaking of worship of Jesus Christ) became a special threat to the unity of the state during the third century and during the reign of Diocletian (284-305), when people of the higher classes began to become Christians in larger numbers. If they had worshiped Jesus *and* Caesar, they would have gone unharmed, but they rejected all forms of syncretism.¹⁷¹

HIS DOMINION (12A)

"And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence." "In his presence" is the Greek *enwpion* which means in this context, "by the authority of" or "on behalf of." The point is that he stands ready to do the bidding of the first beast and he has all the authority needed to carry out the wishes of the first beast, but it's delegated authority and he exercises it on behalf of the beast and his worship in the world.

HIS DESIGN AND DETERMINATION (12B)

"And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast ..." The design or purpose of this beast or false prophet is to promote the authority and worship of the first beast, just as the Holy Spirit works to bring glory to Jesus Christ (John 16:14).

"Whose fatal wound was healed" indicates that this deception is part of his propaganda program to sell people on the beast just as the Holy Spirit truthfully, by contrast, uses the resurrection to convince men of the person and work of Jesus Christ. As in the early church, the resurrection of

Christ was followed by sign miracles to authenticate the message of Christ and His prophets (Heb. 2:4), so this false prophet does the same in his deception.

HIS DECEPTIONS (13-15)

Verse 13. "And he performs great signs" points us to his first deception through the use of miraculous signs. "Performs" is a present tense of repeated actions which indicates he engages in a display of miraculous signs one after another, though only two are mentioned here. "Signs" is plural. The verb here is *poiō* which means "to make, do, accomplish, bring about, produce, or perform." "Signs" is *σημείον* which refers to a wonder or miracle that is designed to show or communicate something. The signs are used of course, to persuade men to believe in, follow after, and worship the beast.

Note that the signs are described as "great," the Greek *megas* meaning "large, great," but it is used of that which is great in the sense of significant, prominent, important, outstanding. The signs the second beast performs won't be the run of the mill miracles that one hears about with pseudo healers or the paranormal events of today.

"So that he even makes fire come down from heaven to earth in the presence of men" illustrates something of the power of his miraculous activity. Whatever this will be, it is clearly designed to counterfeit the miraculous works of God, either that of Elijah in 1 Kings 18:38 or that of the two witnesses in Revelation 11:5 (cf. also 2 Kings 1:10-15; Lev. 10:1-2). Some have suggested that this could be a reference to fire from heaven to imitate that which occurred at Pentecost (Acts 2:3) and could be a reference to pseudo-charismatic gifts to create a counterfeit religious community whose allegiance is to antichrist.

Whatever it is, it is a prominent sign and shows the kind of power Satan will display through his puppets, the beast and the false prophet.

Verse 14. "And he deceives ... because of the signs which it was given to him to perform in the presence of the beast ..." The next thing we see about the signs is that they are designed to deceive, they are deceptive. "Deceives" is the Greek *planō* meaning "to lead astray, cause to wander, mislead, deceive." This word is consistently used in Scripture of the work of false teachers who lead people away from God into some form of false worship (cf. 2 Thess. 2:9-12).

This should be a warning to all of us. Miraculous signs are not in themselves a proof that whatever is going on is from God. There are other issues that must be discerned with the Word of God as the final index and authority, never just our experience. However, we are living in an esoteric, mystic oriented age where reality is too often reduced to a personal experience or some kind of enlightenment. Just note the rise of the psychic "hotlines" and the emphasis in TV shows on the paranormal or on psychic phenomena. Even within the body of Christ, the emphasis has moved away from the Word of God as our authority to an emphasis on phenomena and subjective experiences, the kind promoted in many charismatic circles today.

Next, we are again told these signs are “given to him to perform in the presence of the beast.” The power to produce the signs is Satan’s (Rev. 13:2; 2 Thess. 2:9) and the false prophet performs them in the interest and by the authority of the first beast. As seen above, this is the meaning of “in the presence of,” but the repetition serves to stress the purpose brought out in the next sentence, “telling those who dwell on earth to make an image to the beast ...” It is apparent from this that one of the primary purposes of the signs is to influence men on earth to follow the false prophet’s orders to make an image to the worship of the first beast.

Verse 15. “And there was given to him to give breath to the image.” The image which breathes and speaks is the second great deception of these verses. The word “image” is *eikwn* which is not a mere copy but in fact partakes and constitutes the very reality of the thing of which it is a likeness. The image is designed not only to portray a likeness to the beast, but the reality of his rule and worship. Whatever the image will be it will portray a likeness of the beast which becomes a symbol of his power and majesty, and of the character of his system.

We should note that the image is mentioned three times here in this chapter and in 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20 and 20:4. This image becomes the center of the false worship of the beast and the focal point of the final state of apostasy and idolatry.

Finally, we are told that the false prophet is able to give breath to the image. This gives it the appearance of life. However, it isn’t real life, *zwe*, but only breath, *pneuma*. Since breath or breathing is one of the signs of life, men think the image lives, but John is careful not to say that he gives life (*zwe*) to the image. Only God can do that. It is something miraculous, but also deceptive and false.

Then we are told the image of the beast, through this imparted breath, speaks. This is to be a further confirmation of the miraculous nature of the beast’s image. Some might see this as the result of some product of our modern electronic robot-type of technology. But such would hardly convince people of anything spectacular. Evidently it will go far beyond that.

As in the days of Daniel, those who refuse to worship the beast are to be killed. Notice that it is the image itself which causes the non-worshippers to be killed, undoubtedly by orders it gives when it speaks. While many will be killed, thousands will escape unharmed, but their lives will be in constant jeopardy.

HIS DEMAND AND DECREE (16-17)

Here we see the means by which the second beast carefully and exclusively distinguishes between those who will worship the beast and those who will not so that they might be identified and killed. He forces all men of every class and category of society to receive the mark of the beast either in their right hand or in the forehead, two places that are prominent and easily seen.

Here is sheer tyranny. The word “mark” is the Greek *caragina* which means “an impress made by a stamp” like a brand used on slaves and cattle. Men will become the slaves of the beast and will somehow carry the identifying mark of their slavery.

To enforce the worship of the beast and to make life impossible without his worship, men cannot buy or sell without this mark. As a result of the decree to worship the beast and be branded with his mark, multitudes of believers will be killed directly because they do not have the mark and refuse to receive it or because they starve to death since they cannot buy or sell. Some will survive, however, by living off the land or because other believers who have food share with those who do not (cf. Matt. 24:15-25 and 25:31-40).

We should note that to receive the mark of the beast is tantamount to the worship of the beast, to blasphemy of God, and rejection of Jesus Christ (cf. 13:8; 17:8; 14:9-12; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4).

What will the mark be like? Verse 17 answers this for us. It is the name of the beast or his number. This number is defined in verse 18 as 666. This is the name or number of the first beast and is one of the options for the mark, either his name or his number.

Please note, this also becomes the means of identifying the beast for who and what he is to the remnant of true believers.

This will not be just a number or identification mark on a plastic card. This will be on the person himself. It is interesting however, that within the identification numbers of various agencies, the IRS and others, the number 666 is beginning to pop up more and more.

GOD'S DECLARATION REGARDING THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST (18)

THE PROBLEM OF THE NUMBER

On the meaning of this verse and the number of the beast, 666, the views are almost as numerous as the number of commentaries written on the book of Revelation. John tells us to "calculate the meaning of the number of the beast." Misunderstanding of John's meaning here has led to endless speculation regarding the meaning of the number.

Some have considered the number to represent one of the Roman Emperors like Nero or Caligula or Titus. Thus, antichrist would be Nero redivivus (13:3). Others throughout the centuries have tried, using the number 666, to identify antichrist as some current historical figure of their day like Hitler, Mussolini or even Napoleon. Some have thought it stood for the word "Latin" telling us he would be a Roman. All of these simply show the endless speculations which have occupied the minds of students but are of very little worth to the student of this book and which I believe totally misses John's point.

Why all the speculation and the problem? First, students have taken the verb "calculate" to refer to the ancient practice of gematria. Ancient languages, including Hebrew, Greek and Latin use standard letters from their alphabet as numerical signs. For example, alpha (*a*) in Greek stands for the number one; beta (*b*) the number two; iota (*i*) for ten; iota alpha (*ia*) for 11; and iota beta (*ib*) for 12. The Hebrew alphabet also had numerical

value. *Alep* stands for one; *bet* stands for two; *gimel* for three and so on. Thus, a series of letters could form a word, and at the same time indicate a number.

Alan Johnson describes the practice. He says:

Gematria took many forms and consisted in trying to guess the word from the number or trying to connect one word with another that had the same numerical value. On the walls of Pompeii, there are some graffiti, dated no later than A.D. 79, that illuminate the practice. One reads: "Amerimnus thought upon his lady Harmonia for good. The number of her honorable name is 45 (me [mu epsilon])." The key to the puzzle seems to be in the word "Harmonia," which was probably not the girl's actual name but refers to the nine Muses (the goddesses of song and poetry); and 45 is the sum of all the digits from 1 to 9 (E. M. Blaiklock, *The Archaeology of the New Testament*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1970, p. 131). Another runs: "I love her whose number is 545 (fine [phi mu epsilon])" (Deiss LAE, p. 277). In these cases, the number conceals a name, and the mystery is perhaps known for certain only by the two lovers themselves.

Similarly, the Jews (esp. Hasidim) used Hebrew alphabetical numbers to indicate concealed names and mysterious connections with other words of the same numerical value. For example, the Hebrew word *nahas* ("serpent") has the same numerical value of the Hebrew word *masiah* ("Messiah") (358). From this it was argued that one of the names of the Messiah was "serpent." Some suggest that this may relate to Moses' lifting up the "serpent" in the wilderness (cf. Num. 21; John 3:14).¹⁷²

Johnson goes on to say:

Irenaeus (second century) mentions that many names of contemporary persons and entities were being offered in his day as solutions to this number mystery. Yet he cautioned against the practice and believed that the name of the Antichrist was deliberately concealed because he did not exist in John's day. The name would be secret till the time of his future appearance in the world. Irenaeus expressly refutes the attempt of many to identify the name with any of the Roman emperors. He feels, however, that the gematria approach is John's intended meaning but warns the church against endless speculations (Contra Haereses 29. 30).¹⁷³

Walvoord says regarding this:

A number of other suggestions are made in that the six Roman numerals, that is I, V, X, L, C, D, adds up to 666. J. B. Smith says, "This alludes to the possibility of a Roman being the antichrist." Smith also adds "All the numerals from 1 to 36 total 666. *Beast* in the evil sense occurs exactly 36 times (6x6) in Revelation." Speculation continues ad infinitum using the letter equivalents for numbers in Hebrew, Greek, or Roman numerals. The very variety of the suggestions, however, and the unlikely and unprecedented supposition that someone would rise from the dead to take active part in earthly affairs leaves serious question as to all these imaginative explanations.¹⁷⁴

What then does John mean? The word “calculate” is the Greek *psifizw*, “to count, compute, reckon” (cf. Luke 14:28 the only other place the word is used in the N.T.). This word was used of calculating the numerical value of a word or number, of voting, of a vote in the sense of resolving to do something. But it also meant to calculate in order to arrive at a value (cf. Lev. 27:23 where this word is used in the LXX translation of the OT Hebrew). In modern Greek it means “to observe.”

The best solution is the simplest one. First, nowhere else does John use gematria as a method, but he regularly uses numbers symbolically and especially the number seven (e.g. the seven spirits of God, churches, seals, trumpets, bowls; 24 elders; 144,000 sealed; six stone water pots [John 2:6]). Then in Revelation 15:2 we read, “... and those who had come off victorious from the beast, and from his image and from the number of his name.” Not simply from his mark, but from the number. This implies a symbolical meaning.

Then what? In Scripture seven is the number of perfection, eight is the number of that which is new, three is the number of the Godhead and six is the number of man which falls short (falls short of the number seven). Man was to work six days and rest on the seventh which portrays the salvation and provision of God, a salvation which man cannot attain by his works because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23).

So John says “here is wisdom.” Where? In doing that which John counsels man to do. Who? Those who have understanding, i.e., spiritual discernment or biblical understanding. Then what are we to do? Number or evaluate the spiritual meaning of the number of the beast, which is, John says, “the number of a man.”

THE SIGNIFICANCE AND MEANING OF THE NUMBER 666

Though the beast claims to be God, he is not. He is only a man, indeed, an evil and demonically controlled man (cf. 13:4f; 2 Thess. 2:4f). He is far short of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The three sixes may elude to the satanic trinity—Satan or the dragon, seeking to replace the Father, the beast seeking to replace the Lord Jesus Christ, and the false prophet, seeking to replace the Holy Spirit. But they all fall infinitely short of the triune Godhead. No matter how far we carry the number 666 mathematically as 666666666 it never becomes seven. It always falls short. The point is that this man and his system can never do that which God has promised. Man promises *peace* but brings war; *life*, but brings death; *liberty*, but brings slavery; *happiness*, but brings misery; *significance*, but brings the loss of true meaning and purpose in life.

As the ancient church father Irenaeus proposed, the number may indicate that the beast is the sum of all apostate power, a concentrate of 6,000 years of unrighteousness, wickedness, deception, and false prophecy.¹⁷⁵ The three sixes look at this wickedness in the past, the present and the future culminated in this end time system of the beast.

The general character of the Tribulation is clearly portrayed in this chapter. It is a time of slavery, blasphemy, apostasy, and gross satanic activity. Let us thank God that we have the blessed hope of the rapture (Titus 2:13). But let us not, as we contemplate on all this, forget our responsibility to be involved in the propagation of the gospel of Christ, the only hope for the world.

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1 Chronicles 21:1

Verse Concepts

Then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel.

Job 2:1-7

Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD. The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it." The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause." *read more.*

Zechariah 3:1-2

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. The LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?"

1 Thessalonians 2:18

Verse Concepts

For we wanted to come to you--I, Paul, more than once--and yet Satan hindered us.

Revelation 12:10

Verse Concepts

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.

Job 1:8-11

The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil." Then Satan answered the LORD, "Does Job fear God for nothing? "Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. *read more.*

1 Timothy 5:14

Verse Concepts

Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach;

Revelation 2:10

Verse Concepts

'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Ephesians 6:11-13

Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

Daniel 10:13

Verse Concepts

"But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.

Daniel 12:1

Verse Concepts

"Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found

written in the book, will be rescued.

Revelation 12:7

Verse Concepts

And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war,

Matthew 16:23

Verse Concepts

But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."

Mark 8:33

Verse Concepts

But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."

Matthew 13:3-19

And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, "Behold, the sower went out to sow; and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. "Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. *read more.*

Mark 4:3-16

"Listen to this! Behold, the sower went out to sow; as he was sowing, some seed fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate it up. "Other seed fell on the rocky ground where it did not have much soil; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of soil. *read more.*

Luke 8:4-12

When a large crowd was coming together, and those from the various cities were journeying to Him, He spoke by way of a parable: "The sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell beside the road, and it was trampled under foot and the birds of the air ate it up. "Other seed fell on rocky soil, and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. *read more.*

Matthew 13:24-39

Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. "But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. "But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. *read more.*

Acts 13:8-10

But Elymas the magician (for so his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze on him, and said, "You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord?"

1 John 3:7-10

Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. [read more.](#)

Revelation 13:6

Verse Concepts

And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven.

Zechariah 3:2

Verse Concepts

The LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?"

Luke 10:19

Verse Concepts

"Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.

Revelation 12:9

Verse Concepts

And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Revelation 20:2-3

And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

2 Corinthians 6:15

Verse Concepts

Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?

Deuteronomy 13:13

Verse Concepts

some worthless men have gone out from among you and have seduced the inhabitants of their city, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods' (whom you have not known),

1 Kings 21:10

Verse Concepts

and seat two worthless men before him, and let them testify against him, saying, 'You cursed God and the king ' Then take him out and stone him to death."

Proverbs 6:12

Verse Concepts

A worthless person, a wicked man, Is the one who walks with a perverse mouth,

Revelation 12:4

Verse Concepts

And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.

Genesis 3:1-5

Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" *read more.*

2 Corinthians 11:3

Verse Concepts

But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

John 12:31

Verse Concepts

"Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

John 14:30

Verse Concepts

"I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me;

Share

John 16:11

and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

Verse Concepts

Revelation 9:11

They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.

Verse Concepts

Bible Theasaurus

Enemy (194 instances)

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WHEN DEMONS INVADE THE EARTH

Revelation — Chapter 9

AIM:

To show how terrible will be when God lets Satan unleash the hordes of Hell upon earth during the tribulation.

POINT OF CONTACT:

Did you know that hell contains many strange demon-like creatures? It does, and some of them are going to be loosed on the earth during the tribulation. Today, we will study about them.

INTRODUCTION:

The judgments upon the earth by the living God are becoming increasingly more rapid and intense. The first four angels have sounded their trumpets and in this chapter the fifth and sixth sound their trumpets. When they do terrible things come upon the earth. The eagle had announced three more woes to come on earth. Now they come with great fury (Revelation 8:13; 9:12; 11:14).

I. The Fallen Star (Verse 1)

The Star is probably Satan. Fall should be "fallen" as if the action had taken place. This is probably the same event as mentioned in 12:7-9, which gives more detail. To this star was given (by whom? God!) the key (or authority to open) to the bottomless pit. Nothing or no one can come out of hell except as God allows it.

II. The Bottomless Pit (Verse 2)

Hell is a Bottomless Pit or the Deep Abyss as it is sometimes referred to in Scripture. Think of it! People in hell may be continually falling. Hell is a great furnace. There is fire there. So much that when hell is opened the smoke that ascends darkens the sun and the air above the earth.

III. The Demons of Hell Loosed (Verses 3-12)

When the smoke clears, people discover that locusts (demonic creatures) are loose on the earth. Locusts normally eat grass and green foliage but these hurt people except the 144,000 sealed Jews. God protects His own. Some believe that all the saved on earth at this time will also be protected by God (II Timothy 2:19).

Verse 5 These will have a sting like a scorpion's and will invade the earth for five months. These locusts represent a divine judgment of God upon a wicked world.

Verse 6 In the Gospels, those in the grip of demons were not free to exercise their own will and therefore were not free to take their own lives. So in the tribulation, men under this demonic influence will not be able to take their own lives even though they would desire to do so.

Verse 7 The description of the locusts given in these verses makes it clear that they are not ordinary locusts and are so named only because of their function as a judgment and plague from the Lord.

These were not horses but had a resemblance to horses. "Like unto." "Prepared unto battle" shows us they are war-like creatures from Hell.

Their heads were "as it were" crowns of gold. Not literal crowns but appearing as such.

"Faces as men" — They were not literal men but looked like men.

Verse 8 They actually have hair and teeth.

Verse 9 Breastplates of Iron implies that they are immune to destruction. They have wings which implies speed and suggests the impossibility of evading their attack.

Verse 10 "Stings in their tails" — This is to be taken literally.

Verse 11 They had a king over them (Proverbs 30:27) (Satan). Abaddon means destruction and Apollyon means destroyer. Satan has been the great destroyer in history.

In the Garden of Eden, Satan attempted to destroy man's body and soul (Romans 5:12). Over fifty billion people have lived in history and forty-seven billion have died physically. The devil has destroyed their bodies and many of their souls (I Peter 5:8).

This woe was terrible. Teacher, stop and meditate upon what a chaotic scene this will be as these creatures terrify people for five months.

IV. The Four Angels (Verses 13-15)

Verse 13 The voice is undoubtedly God's.

Verse 14 These four angels bound in the Euphrates being loosed bring forth a flood tide of destruction on the earth. Why in the Euphrates? This is a prominent place in Scripture. The Garden of Eden was in this area. The sin of mankind began here; the first murder was committed here; the first war was fought here; the tower of Babel was near this place; the Israelites in captivity were brought here (Babylon) which was the fountainhead of idolatry. The Euphrates River divides the East from the West. There has been a restraining power that has kept the hordes of the East from spilling over into the West but now after these angels are loosed the hordes soon will come (Revelation 16:12). These four angels may have had something to do with holding them back.

Verse 15 These four angels had been prepared for an appointed hour when they would be loosed and the primary purpose of their loosing is to see that people are terrified and to see that one-third of the people are killed.

V. The 200 Million Horsemen (Verses 16-19)

Verse 16 Dr. Newell labels these "The Hellish Horseman." The size of the army is stupendous, 200 million! This is the Devil's calvary. "These are not human beings, but a wholesale invasion of the demon world which is a further result of Satan opening the door of the shaft of the bottomless pit." McGee.

Verse 17 The colors are as striking as the horseman are unnatural. Fire is fiery red. Hyacinth is dull dark blue. Brimstone is light yellow. The horse is the animal of war. Hell is now making war on mankind. This is to be interpreted literally.

Verses 18 and 19 One-third of the earth's population is killed. Remember, one-fourth had been killed earlier (Revelation 6:8). If three billion were living at the beginning of the tribulation then 1/4 or 750 million were killed earlier and now these demonic creatures.

Notice, they kill with the mouth and they hurt with the tail.

VI. The Astounding Picture of Human Rebellion (Verses 20-21)

Despite the horrible events just depicted, people will not repent of their sins. Yes, they hear they should and know they should. The 144,000 have been spared and are preaching but they will not listen. This seems unreal, but in our day people did not turn to God in the Depression of the thirties, nor the war of the forties, nor during earthquakes and hurricanes. So in the Tribulation, people will continue in idolatry. They will worship false, dead, inanimate gods which can't see, hear, nor walk (II Thessalonians 2:9-12).

Notice the sins that will be prevalent then:

1. Idolatry
2. Sorceries (Narcotic and drug users and fortune telling).
3. Fornication (Lax marriage vows, adultery abounding.)
4. Thefts (Robbery and looting will be widespread. A time of lawlessness.)

We must be near the time for these things are constantly increasing.

CONCLUSION

Remember, this is God's judgment upon a wicked, religious world. Satan who would like to destroy all the people he can and keep them out of heaven will be allowed to unleash the hordes of hell upon the earth's inhabitants. Be sure that pupils know how to be saved before they are dismissed.

QUESTIONS